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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

NEW CALEDONIA

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	GENERAL	1 - 4	2
II.	RECENT DEVELOPMENTS	5 - 10	2
III.	CONSIDERATION BY THE UNITED NATIONS	11 - 16	11
	A. Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples	11	11
	B. Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)	12 - 14	11
	C. General Assembly	15 - 16	13
IV.	CONSIDERATION BY THE SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM	17	13

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I. GENERAL

1. New Caledonia is located in the Pacific Ocean, about 1,500 kilometres east of Australia and 1,700 kilometres north of New Zealand. It comprises one large island, known as Grande Terre, and smaller islands known as the Loyalty Islands (Ouvéa, Maré, Lifou and Tiga), the Bélep Archipelago, the Isle of Pines and Huon Island. There are also several uninhabited islands to the north of the Loyalty Islands. The area of Grande Terre is 16,750 square kilometres and that of the whole Territory 19,103 square kilometres. Nouméa, the capital, is located in the south of Grande Terre.

2. According to the 1989 census, the population was 164,173, comprising 73,598 indigenous Melanesians known as Kanaks (44.8 per cent); 55,085 persons of European origin, mainly French (33.6 per cent), of whom 35,000 persons, known as Caldoches, are descendants of the early settlers; 18,936 Wallisians and Tahitians (11.5 per cent); and 16,554 others, mainly Indonesians and Vietnamese (10.1 per cent). It is estimated that in 1995 the population was 181,000 persons. The average population growth rate for 1990-1995 was 1.53 per cent. 1/

3. There are two principal political groupings and numerous small parties. The two main groupings are the Rassemblement pour la Calédonie dans la République (RPCR) and the Front de libération nationale kanake socialiste (FLNKS). The constituents of FLNKS include the Union calédonienne (UC), the parti de libération kanak (PALIKA), the Union progressiste mélanésiene and the Parti socialiste calédonien (PSC). 2/

4. The Matignon Accords of 1988 (see A/AC.109/1000, paras. 9-14 and A/AC.109/2028, paras. 5-9 and annexes I-IV, VI and VII) provide for a 10-year period of economic and social development and a self-determination referendum to be held in 1998.

II. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

5. On 16 October 1995, the signatories of the Matignon Accords met at Hotel Matignon to discuss the implementation of the Accords. Upon the conclusion of that round of meetings, the following final communiqué was issued:

> "On 16 October the Prime Minister and the Minister for Overseas Departments and Territories met at the Hotel Matignon, with a delegation from FLNKS, headed by Mr. Paul Neaoutyine, and a delegation from RPCR, headed by Mr. Jacques Lafleur, to begin the discussions to be held among the three partners in the Matignon Accords prior to the consultation called for in the Referendum Act of 9 November 1988. The three partners placed on record their agreement that the consultation should launch a process that would enhance the prosperity, responsibility and dignity of New Caledonia and of all its population groups. The representative of FLNKS recalled his group's desire that that process should be aimed at the acquisition of sovereignty, which was, in his view, a precondition for lasting peace. The representative of RPCR expressed his group's concern for institutional stability within the Republic. The partners agreed to seek a consensual

solution, based on respect for each party's convictions, that would be acceptable to all and would enjoy the support of the largest possible number of Caledonians. Aware of the technical and political difficulties inherent in such a goal, the State, FLNKS and RPCR reaffirmed the specific role they had to play in continuing the responsibilities they had assumed jointly in 1988 as the initiators of the discussion. In their view, one of those responsibilities was to stimulate a debate, involving all sectors of Caledonian society, on what was at stake in the Territory's future. To reconcile those different objectives, the State, FLNKS and RPCR took the following decisions by mutual agreement:

"The Minister for Overseas Departments and Territories and the leaders of RPCR and FLNKS shall meet at regular intervals to report on the progress of their discussions from a political standpoint, to discuss the issues with other political actors and to submit them for public debate, particularly in the context of the States General to be organized in the Territory.

"To prepare for those meetings, a Preliminary Discussion Committee, consisting of smaller delegations sent by the partners, shall be responsible for exploring ways of reaching consensus, considering, in particular, their economic, financial, technical and legal dimensions. This Committee shall be tripartite, at least for an initial period.

"To symbolize the spirit of openness that pervades their efforts, the State, FLNKS and RPCR propose that the Monitoring Committee's discussions be expanded to include the political groupings that participate in the Territorial Congress. The Minister for Overseas Departments and Territories shall begin the necessary consultations for that expansion immediately so that an expanded Monitoring Committee may meet in January 1996.

"Lastly, the three partners expressed the same concern that implementation of economic and social development measures should be accelerated. To that end, the High Commissioner of New Caledonia was given the task of establishing, together with the territorial and provincial leaders, a realignment and development commission to identify priority cases and to coordinate the efforts of all actors involved in development.

"The State, FLNKS and RPCR agreed to set up this entire structure to ensure that a renewed and effective framework for continuing their discussions would be in place by early January 1996. The Prime Minister reaffirmed that the State would be a full and active partner in that context. The two Caledonian partners expressed their intent to begin, without delay, an initial dialogue aimed at identifying areas of agreement and common concerns."

6. Mr. Jean-Jacques de Peretti, Minister for Overseas Departments and Territories of France, visited New Caledonia from 11 to 15 February 1996. 3/

7. On 15 February 1996, Mr. Jean-Jacques Peretti, in a statement to the Comité de discussion préalable (Preliminary Discussion Committee), outlined the position of the Government of France regarding the political, economic and social evolution of the Territory within the framework of the Matignon Accords. He stated, inter alia, the following:

> "... The Prime Minister asked me to visit the Territory as soon as your summer recess was over in order to begin this tripartite preliminary discussion, which is the core of the framework we decided upon on 16 October 1995 ...
>
> "... What are our aims in this discussion and, first of all, what is our timetable? I think we can talk about three time-frames: six months, one year and 18 months.
>
> "- Within the next six months, we intend to outline a general agreement and identify the key principles and the major points of the consensual solution.
>
> "- Within 12 months, we will 'fill in the blanks', get more specific and work on translating our agreement into legal terms.
>
> "- Within 18 months, we plan to enact it into positive law after the necessary preliminary discussions have been held in New Caledonia and in metropolitan France. This is a very tight schedule which takes us through the summer of 1997 at best, or more likely to the beginning of autumn - in other words, only a few months before the 1998 deadline and the national elections. This is actually very little time in which to accomplish what needs to be done, so clearly it is not too soon to get started.
>
> "For if I were to sum things up, I would say that, during this relatively short period, we must move from the current consensus – which is still based largely on the rejection of certain tendencies of the past or of certain developments that were unanimously rejected – first, to a positive consensus on what we are all prepared to accept, and then, to an active consensus on the solution which we will have to uphold together, side by side, before the Caledonian public.
>
> "I should like to dwell for a moment on the role and position of the State in this matter, which have given rise to a number of comments and analyses which are not always in agreement and, to my mind, not always relevant. With respect to the Territory's future, the State is neither an arbiter nor a notary who can be called upon to rewrite the marriage contract once the ceremony is over. The State holds powers which, once transferred, can give new impetus to Caledonian responsibility. Since our common efforts take place, by definition, in a legalistic context, the State also has the legal, legislative and constitutional means to take the necessary steps in a context of democratic continuity and legitimacy.
>
> "In the economic sphere, the State alone is in a position to answer some of the questions that have been raised. In historical terms, only the State, at its highest levels, is in a position to make the symbolic

gestures required for reconciliation between the French nation and the Melanesian community. What is sometimes felt as undue State discretion does not, then, reflect any particular modesty or a lack of interest or involvement. On the contrary, this relative discretion reflects a desire to avoid making the State into an omnipresent force by portraying the partner who is still essentially in power at this stage as the bearer of a fixed and comprehensive proposal for organizing the Territory's future, which might suggest that the debate was already closed.

"Obviously, this does not mean that the State is making no demands in the discussion, much less that it has no thoughts concerning the problems involved or the avenues that could be explored in search of a solution. These demands are few, but fraught with meaning. Few, because the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister have clearly indicated their desire that the State should engage in this discussion without prejudging it, leaving all technocratic or legal certainties aside. Our discussion must be political, but it must also encompass issues of identity, culture and history. It must be imbued with imagination and an understanding of other points of view, even more than with points of law or administration.

"However, these demands are, as I said, fraught with meaning. First of all, the State is not ready to accept the principle of an independence that is ultimately sanctioned by a majority of the voters giving a simple answer to a simple question. We grant that this principle, which we consider to be the essential, inescapable law of democracy, may be viewed differently by some of you, taking a different political and historical approach. Based on this understanding, we must bear in mind that the consensual solution should enable each party to reposition itself in its own historical and political perspective.

"But I believe that it would be a betrayal of your trust to let any ambiguity remain on this crucial point, which is the conditions for self-determination and the right of the Caledonian people to control its own destiny.

"Nevertheless, majority rule must not weigh inexorably on a minority that is prevented from fulfilling its aspirations. This is the true and lasting meaning of 1988 and of the reconciliation forged between the communities living on this soil. This is why the second demand which the State has brought to this discussion is an *a priori* rejection of the status quo. Ten years after the Matignon Accords, now that we are less pressed for time, it is indispensable to consider how we can enhance the expression of Caledonian responsibility, Caledonian identity and the dignity of this land and of its inhabitants.

"And since changes are necessary, the State hopes that the preparations for these changes will not mask the real issues. It seems to me that these real issues concern, first, the link to France as a whole, and second, New Caledonia's control over its economic and social development.

"If, in the spirit of consensus we advocate, we can avoid dodging these issues because they are difficult and seek the necessary compromises, both substantive and verbal, as well as ways of progressing towards a reconciliation we all want, I am certain that we will enable New Caledonia to take a decisive step forward in its development by making a real choice and not a choice by default, a choice which opts first and foremost for peace and stability, but which also embraces the pursuit of modernity - political, institutional and economic modernity; modernity in fact and in spirit. I will give two examples of this:

"The traditional idea that diplomatic functions are carried out exclusively by the upper echelons undoubtedly needs rethinking. France's efforts in the Pacific can only be enriched by the Caledonian dimension which you will bring to it through the affirmation of your specific identity.

"In the sphere of economic and social development, the State continues to feel that it shares responsibility for the welfare of every Caledonian. Given that considerable work remains to be done in this area, who could afford to refuse, on principle, the assistance which the nation feels obligated to provide for the benefit of the Caledonian community as a whole?

"Lastly, on the topic of responsibilities, it is necessary to look beyond the competencies assigned to your institutions and think about your real capacity to exercise them freely. The nation is already willing to recognize your right, under the Statute, to determine the framework for your economic development and the rules of your society, in accordance with the great republican principles. But reality does not always match this description. The morass of legal provisions and administrative or judicial controls which are sometimes exercised without due regard for local circumstances can strip this recognized autonomy of much of its meaning. The problem is not a simple one. It cannot, without obvious risks, be solved through the elimination of controls. But radical improvements are needed.

"The rule of law in New Caledonia must be a simple rule of law, as befits a country which must mobilize its energies in the service of development. For the second concern of the State is to encourage and promote the controlled, autonomous development of the Territory's economy. Thanks to its mineral wealth, its metallurgical industry and the indirect benefits of this core activity, your economy stands out from the other overseas economies. It is more complete and better balanced, and less geared towards the marketing of imports. In the future, we must consolidate these advantages by building a tourist industry, which could become the second pillar of your development, and by strengthening agricultural and fishing activities to reduce your food dependency.

"The State is prepared to help you rise to that challenge. The vision that some may have of a France that wants to keep you economically dependent, the better to preserve its political trusteeship, is utterly baseless. As in 1988, the consensual solution we must forge will have an

economic and a financial component. It is my hope that, in discussing this aspect of our agreements, we will be certain to stress those actions which will have a direct and powerful impact on economic development and realignment.

"We must also have the courage to re-examine certain generally accepted ideas. The economic world is a world of realities, but these realities are changing and economic actors must be able to adapt. Too often, in my view, discussion of economic projects is limited to competing proposals of 'certainties' which have not always been independently proved.

"We need to balance what we say about economic realignment with the scale of our achievements but, above all, with the data and coherence of our projects and the resources we give ourselves to implement them. A development and realignment commission without institutional decision-making power may help us, on the other hand, to organize these thoughts, to arrange them in a larger context around a few central themes and to include all the economic and social actors in the Territory so that each is informed and able to participate in the discussion on an equal footing and, little by little, common approaches emerge.

"My satisfaction at seeing the successful financial readjustment of ENERCAL is tinged with dread when I consider the time and energy that were necessary in order to resolve a problem which was, in the end, rather simple and which, if the various actors involved had been a bit more lucid and responsible, should never have arisen in the first place.

"We must be better, more efficient, have more foresight, and, in my appeal, I am exempting neither the State nor the various agencies or companies which are almost completely dependent on it and which must be models of efficiency and commitment to promoting New Caledonia's development.

"The State also has ideas and proposals to put forward concerning the organization of local institutions. Earlier I mentioned the question of administration. Beyond that, we must focus attention on coordinating areas of competence between the Territory and the provinces. Since 1993, we have repeatedly stressed the need to enhance the coherence at the Territory level, of certain economic and social policies. This effort must be reconciled with the attachment you all feel to the principle that the provincial community must have competence under ordinary law. However, the harmonization of statements and policies does not necessarily imply a transfer of areas of competence. I took note, in particular, in the remarks made by the representative of RPCR, of the concept of territorial schemes subject to approval by the provincial assemblies. I find this an interesting concept. It might also be possible to assign the implementation of policies of common interest to partner agencies. This is what we all did, together, in 1994 with the establishment of ADECAL. The State also hopes that the question of institutional stability will be dealt with, and that the situation of the provinces and that of the Territory will be considered separately."

"The State favours the establishment of an economic and social council that would be as representative as possible, which is not the case at present. The establishment of a Preliminary Discussion Committee, which is a new instrument for our dialogue, shows that the process spelt out at Matignon in October is taking hold. I was determined to mark this event by coming to greet you and opening this first meeting ..."

8. At the same meeting, Mr. Rock Wamytan, President of the Front de libération nationale kanake socialiste (FLNKS), described the position of FLNKS as follows:

"Here we are at the dawn of an historic era for our Territory, eight years after the signing of the Matignon Accords, two years before the end of this period of institutional stability and social harmony; we must now pave the way for our common destiny. Since that handshake between Mr. Jean-Marie Tjibaou and Mr. Jacques Lafleur, and we should not forget its deep significance, we have come a long way, but much remains to be done to ensure the success of our wager on realignment, one of the linchpins of the Matignon Accords.

"While we talked then of a challenge to intelligence, or a wager that it would prevail, now we must face what is perhaps a more difficult challenge, that of building together a future characterized by progress and prosperity for ourselves and for our children in the decades to come. As Prime Minister Alain Juppé said in Paris on 16 October 1995, the whole purpose of our discussions is indeed to build this future, for 1998 is just around the corner and we are in the home stretch leading to the referendum provided by the 1988 Act.

"For several years now, we, the historic partners in these Accords have put forward proposals to prepare for the culmination of this 10-year period. Words such as 'negotiations', 'endless discussions' and 'the consensual solution' were often used so that we would be in the best possible position when this historic turning point, the 1998 referendum, arrived.

"FLNKS has integrated into its approach this idea of a consensual solution, an alternative to the scenario generally associated with a referendum on self-determination, which contains the seeds of a potential conflict, given the balance of political power in our Territory ... Thus, as we gather around the table to share our ideas on the content of this consensual solution, may I remind you of some of these substantive problems that FLNKS hopes will be addressed and resolved within the framework of the much-discussed consensual solution.

"There is, first and foremost, the legitimate and historical claim of the Kanak people to sovereignty and independence. As the indigenous people of this country, having been colonized at one point in its history, the Kanak people has the right to exist as a 'specific' people; it has the right to emancipation and to choose its own destiny. The French Constitution, in article 75, recognizes this 'specificity'.

"In December 1987, the United Nations endorsed this international affirmation of the Kanak people's right to independence and also recognized FLNKS as the legitimate representative of that people. FLNKS is not seeking independence but rather is requesting the French State to give the Kanak people the opportunity to exercise its right to its emancipation and sovereignty ...

"Several weeks ago, FLNKS had occasion to unveil its plan for the future of the Territory. I would like to refer to it again briefly. We hope, in the context of what I have just outlined, to have in place by 1998 a free and sovereign State which would have a number of areas of competence constituting the principal powers of sovereignty, including international relations, immigration control and the control over natural resources. For a number of years, to be determined by negotiation, this State would allow the French State to exercise competence in certain areas, such as security, public order, defence, currency, inter alia. These areas of competence would be restored to the new State according to a timetable.

"FLNKS believes that the establishment of this State is a guarantee of peace and stability, and of genuine economic, social and cultural development for all inhabitants of this Territory. For the French State, it would be a guarantee of the maintenance of special and lasting ties, freely offered and accepted, with New Caledonia. For FLNKS and the Kanak people, this would be the institutional guarantee of an irreversible process that would lead us to the full exercise of our sovereignty. This is our starting position at the negotiating table. We will have to negotiate it, since this was the approach decided by FLNKS; we will, however, remain realistic. In view of the realities and the interest of our peoples, FLNKS will not play the role of sorcerer's apprentice. Even if we are three partners in the Matignon Accords, it is your responsibility, as representative of the State which colonized the Kanak people, to show us the necessary way out - one which will enable us to sever the ties I described earlier. This is the price of a successful consensual solution.

"I believe that FLNKS can find points of convergence with RPCR which will form the basis for this solution; our various meetings already prove that they exist. The more active groups which FLNKS contacted in January 1996 also share some of our points of view. It is now up to the State to fulfil its historic responsibility: it must tell us how it plans to work with the Kanak people towards emancipation while integrating what FLNKS considers to be its gain: the legitimacy of all those who will henceforth share our destiny on this land of our ancestors.

"This is, of course, a genuine challenge, a new wager that intelligence will prevail. We are convinced that together we will at last be able to deliver New Caledonia from its 'colonial' context and steer it in the direction of progress and modernity at the dawn of this third millennium."

9. The position of the Rassemblement pour la Calédonie dans la République (RPCR) was summarized by its President, Mr. Jacques Lafleur, as follows:

"... The mission of Mr. J. J. de Peretti is to attempt to further this consensual solution in order to avoid a referendum on self-determination, which no one wants today. The State does not have to cede anything. Steps must be taken to ensure that everyone feels he is included in New Caledonia's future, a future which ought to have a sufficiently long institutional life, and it must if a number of plans are to be implemented ...

"... The Prime Minister is in favour of this consensual solution. He would like to see an agreement between the Europeans and Melanesians, the Territory's main ethnic groups, who play leading roles in public life. Both these communities are willing to listen to each other so that each can lead a normal life in this country.

"In my view, belonging to France is not negotiable. Those who want independence say that they want to be emancipated. This concept of emancipation is different from mine. I believe that they need to learn to administer a country and an economy. Emancipation, to my mind, has never meant independence. It simply means that we are 18,000 kilometres from France. Accordingly, we must take responsibility for our own administration. Certain habits, such as what I believe is Société le Nickel's bad habit of acting high and mighty in New Caledonia, must cease. The Territory has leaders and a true élite. This élite must be empowered to speak for it has something to say. Yet that does not mean that we wish to take away certain prerogatives from the State.

"In making proposals here, we tend to vie with one another to please a public that would be satisfied with far less. All the FLNKS proposals must be read, even when they seem excessive. As far as I am concerned, I have always believed that they made a choice, that choice being the consensual solution. Clearly, those known as the fathers of the Matignon Agreements - I would much prefer to speak of 'brothers', that would sound younger - are today negotiating with the advantage of experience."

10. On 15 February 1996, the following communiqué was agreed upon and issued by the French Minister for Overseas Departments and Territories, FLNKS and RPCR:

"Mr. Jean-Jacques de Peretti, Minister for Overseas Departments and Territories, Mr. Jacques Lafleur, President of RPCR and Mr. Rock Wamytan, President of FLNKS, formed a Preliminary Discussion Committee on 15 February 1996 in Nouméa, established by the three partners in the Matignon Accords, in order to seek a consensual solution which could be proposed to the Caledonians at the end of the period covered by these Accords.

"The three partners, having stated their respective positions, agreed that their discussions would focus on three main areas:

"The nature of the link between New Caledonia and France and its dependencies;

"Increasing local responsibility;

"Institutional alignment and political representation.

"The three partners set a goal of drafting in six months the general framework of an agreement which could be supplemented and clarified before the end of 1996. Its political ratification and legal enactment should be completed by mid-1997 following an extensive debate.

"A limited meeting of the Preliminary Discussion Committee will be held by early next week to pursue discussions on the bases defined on 15 February and to prepare the next plenary meeting of the Committee."

III. CONSIDERATION BY THE UNITED NATIONS

A. Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

11. The Special Committee considered the question of New Caledonia at its 1442nd, 1445th and 1447th meetings, between 10 and 13 July 1995. At its 1445th meeting, on 12 July, in accordance with its decision of 10 July, the Special Committee heard a statement by Mr. Yann Céléné Uregei of the Congrès populaire (see A/AC.109/PV.1445). At the 1447th meeting, on 13 July, the Acting Chairman drew attention to a draft resolution on New Caledonia submitted by Fiji and Papua New Guinea (see A/AC.109/L.1834). At the same meeting, the representative of Papua New Guinea made a statement (A/AC.109/PV.1447) in the course of which he introduced, on behalf also of Fiji, draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1834. At the same meeting, the Special Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote (the text of the resolution is contained in document A/AC.109/2034). On 24 July 1995, the text of the resolution was transmitted to the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations for the attention of his Government.

B. Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

12. At its 3rd meeting, on 9 October 1995, the Committee heard a statement by Mr. Yann Céléné Uregei of Congrès Populaire (A/C.4/50/SR.3, paras. 30-35).

13. At the Committee's 6th meeting, on 11 October 1995 (A/C.4/50/SR.6), the representative of France said that he wished to speak on the question of New Caledonia under agenda item 18, despite his Government's continuing reservations regarding United Nations competence in the affairs of one of France's overseas departments or territories, which were essentially within its own domestic jurisdiction, in the terms of Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter of the United Nations. He further stated the following.

"The political, economic and social climate in New Caledonia had changed radically over the past seven years. All the political forces in the Territory had, under enlightened leadership since the 1988 Matignon Accords, shown that they were intent on re-establishing peace and building

their future together. The three essential provisions of the Accords, it would be recalled, were the right of Caledonians to self-determination; decentralization; and social and economic realignment and development of the Territory. The right to self-determination was scheduled to be exercised in 1998 through a referendum in which only voters continuously resident in the Territory for at least 10 years would participate. As to decentralization, it had been decided that the three provinces of New Caledonia would be administered by their own elected representatives and would enjoy broad jurisdiction and resources corresponding to their needs. His Government had acted resolutely to promote the economic and social development of the Territory and reduce inequalities. The Committee to Monitor the Matignon Accords met annually to assess the implementation of the Accords, make any necessary adjustments and set new priorities. In 1994, two interim monitoring committees had been set up to provide technical advice.

"The institutional mechanisms provided for in the Accords had been put in place. The Territory's organization into three provinces with broader powers had improved the access of all regions to political and administrative power. The provincial assemblies, elected by universal suffrage, were functioning well, and each province was fully engaged in the work of economic development.

"France's objective was to continue to promote harmonious, balanced and job-creating economic development, and to that end his Government had signed several development contracts with each province, as mandated by the Matignon Accords. In keeping with the objectives outlined in the Referendum Act of 1988, the contracts were a way of creating employment equitably throughout the Territory, so that the South did not outstrip the other provinces, and they reflected the priorities set by each of the provinces. They provided, inter alia, for extensive low-cost housing projects and the large-scale development of the city of Nouméa. Major infrastructural programmes were moving along rapidly and satisfactorily, and the nickel export sector was being promoted, despite a depressed world market. In February 1995, the Agency for the Economic Development of New Caledonia had been set up, comprising the Government of France, the territorial government and the three provincial governments, with a programme of action focusing on local development, territorial development and the attraction of French and foreign investment.

"In the field of training, very encouraging results had already been seen in secondary and vocational education, and an effort was being made to build new schools and to train more teachers, especially among Melanesians, to serve the growing number of pupils. Concomitantly, the cultural identity of the Melanesian community was being safeguarded through an agency for the development of Kanak culture and a government-funded cultural centre.

"To sustain the encouraging pattern of the past seven years, new guidelines were being devised to meet specific concerns expressed in the Territory regarding young people, the cities, housing, the need for

economic diversification in the private sector and the need to recognize the role of custom in Caledonian society.

"With regard to the draft resolution to be adopted by the Committee on New Caledonia, France was pleased to note that the text in document A/50/23, Part V, chapter IX, took account of the general progress in the Territory and referred to the dialogue established between the parties under the auspices of the French Government. Accordingly, his delegation would raise no objection to the text, nor would it ask for a vote.

"The Matignon Accords had radically transformed New Caledonia's relations with the surrounding region, and its political, economic, scientific and cultural contacts with neighbouring countries were expanding. A recent cooperation agreement with Vanuatu was a case in point. France attached the greatest importance to the Territory's incorporation into the South Pacific community and would continue to encourage such exchanges and cooperation. His Government was determined to do everything to ensure that the inhabitants of New Caledonia could build a prosperous land and exercise their right to self-determination in the best possible conditions in 1998." (ibid., paras. 6-13)

14. At its 15th meeting, on 3 November 1995 (see A/C.4/50/SR.15), the Committee adopted without a vote the draft resolution on New Caledonia contained in document A/50/23 (Part V) (A/50/602).

C. General Assembly

15. During the general debate, at the 15th plenary meeting, on 2 October 1995, the representative of Papua New Guinea referred to the question of New Caledonia in his statement (see A/50/PV.15).

16. At its 82nd plenary meeting, on 6 December 1995 (A/50/PV.82), the General Assembly adopted without a vote resolution 50/37 entitled "Question of New Caledonia".

IV. CONSIDERATION BY THE SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM

17. The Communiqúe of the Twenty-sixth South Pacific Forum, held in Papua New Guinea from 3 to 15 September 1995, contains the following reference to New Caledonia (A/50/475, paras. 35-36):

"The Forum noted that, while implementation of the Matignon Accords had continued smoothly and generally positively in the past 12 months, the Territory's long-term political and constitutional future remained uncertain. The Forum felt that, as the countdown to the 1998 referendum began in earnest, regional monitoring of the situation should be stepped up. This included reactivating, in cooperation with the French authorities, the Forum's Ministerial Committee on New Caledonia. The Forum reiterated its view that the 1998 referendum should closely follow accepted United Nations principles and practices.

"The Forum reaffirmed its support for continuing contacts with New Caledonia as a constructive contribution towards the Matignon process. it noted the particular role of the Kanak Training Fund in this, and the Fund's continuing successful operation."

Notes

1/ The Europa World Year Book 1992, vol. I, p. 1148; United Nations World Population Prospects: The 1994 Revision (E/95/XIII.16).

2/ Le Monde, 6 December 1994.

3/ Agence France-Presse, 11, 14, 15, 16 and 19 February 1996; Le Quotidien, 13, 15 and 16 February 1996; Le Figaro, 15, 16 and 17 February 1996; Le Monde, 16 and 17 February 1996; Le Parisien, 16 February 1996; L'Humanité, 16 February 1996; Libération, 20 February 1996; L'Express, 29 February 1996; Le quotidien calédonien, 10, 14, 15, 17 and 28 February 1996; Les nouvelles calédoniennes, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 February 1996; Les nouvelles hebdo, 12 February 1996.